UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Cook - Interior 5634

For Release MAY 26, 1963

PUBLIC INVITED TO VISIT NEW OCEAN RESEARCH VESSEL IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

Residents and visitors in the Nation's Capital will have an opportunity to inspect one of the Government's most modern oceanographic research vessels, the Albatross IV, during the Memorial Day week-end, May 30-June 2.

The 187-foot craft, newest scientific vessel of the Department of the Interior, will be docked at Pier 2 of the old Naval Weapons Plant on the Anacostia River, Washington, D. C. It will be open to the public between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. each of the four days. Entrance to the pier is at 8th and M Streets, Southeast.

Commissioned on May 9 at Woods Hole, Mass., the Albatross IV is the largest and best equipped of the Department's oceanographic vessels. Designed as a base for fisheries and oceanographic research in the Northwest Atlantic, the all-season boat is equipped for biological and oceanographical studies in any ocean. Her air-conditioned laboratories enable Bureau of Commercial Fisheries research to extend to tropical waters if conditions arise. Her hull is strongly braced against ice pressures for work in arctic regions. The stern ramp for handling gear permits operations in the roughest weather.

Twin diesel engines drive the ship at 12 knots over a range of 9,000 miles.

The trim Albatross IV is lighter and faster than the first Albatross, placed in service in 1882. She is loaded with research equipment to aid in collecting and evaluating data vital to the Nation's commercial fisheries and to add to the accumulating oceanographic data. Her research facilities include wet and dry laboratories, photographic and electronic laboratories, an open-deck laboratory for examining specimens immediately after they are taken, and a variety of electronic equipment: underwater sonar, underwater television, closed-circuit aboard-ship television, and an underwater electromagnetic log.

Scientists will work in this safe and stable laboratory as the vessel moves over the ocean. At the same time, they will be able to study ocean life and conditions in the sea several hundred feet below them—relayed to television screens from a cable-suspended underwater television camera.

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From this floating laboratory fishery biologists and other scientists will study the abundance of fish and their distribution in the sea. They will seek more information on the environmental conditions that cause fluctuations in fish numbers, study plankton (an important link in the food chain of many valuable sea animals), and observe oceanographic conditions.

The Albatross has quarters for a scientific staff of 16 and a crew of 22.

Contrary to the usual manner of assembly, the Albatross IV was "keel up" in the early stages of construction rather than "keel down." Consequently, her keel was never "laid." Instead, at the proper time in her construction, three cranes righted her so the work could continue on her superstructure.

The Albatross IV was designed by Dwight S. Simpson & Associates of Boston, Mass., and was built by the Southern Shipbuilding Corporation of Slidell, La. The ship was completed in October 1962 and was moved to the Woods Hole site of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Biological Laboratory for commissioning.

The Albatross will return to Woods Hole following her 4-day open house in Washington.

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